



NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Heather Weaver or Molly Sander
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: msander@state.nd.us

Infant Immunization Week Observed in North Dakota ***Governor and First Lady Launch Immunization Awareness Campaign for New Parents***

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed April 24 through 30, 2005, as *Infant Immunization Week* in North Dakota. The theme of this year's event, which focuses on immunizing babies against 12 diseases by age 2, is *Vaccination: An Act of Love*.

"Immunizations are one of the most important ways parents can protect their children," Hoeven said. "All children deserve to grow up healthy, and timely vaccinations can help them do just that."

"It is critical that we vaccinate infants and young children who are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases," said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. "In addition, children who are not immunized increase the chance that they will pass vaccine-preventable diseases to others."

In conjunction with *Infant Immunization Week*, Governor Hoeven and First Lady Mikey Hoeven announced the launch of a campaign to remind new parents of the importance of infant immunization. Beginning May 1, 2005, the parents of every baby born in North Dakota will receive a congratulatory greeting card from the Hoevens. Included with each card are a North Dakota immunization schedule and a pocket-sized immunization record. Hallmark donated the greetings cards, and the state health department and *Healthy North Dakota* are coordinating delivery of the cards to new parents.

"Every child in North Dakota is precious," said First Lady Mikey Hoeven, spokesperson for *Healthy North Dakota*. "That's why we are encouraging new parents to make sure their children receive life-saving vaccinations. Ensuring our children are immunized will keep them safe and will help to build a healthy North Dakota."

For more information, contact the North Dakota Immunization Program at 701.328.2378 or toll-free at 800.472.2180.

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